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This is the first record of the taxon at such a low altitude (218-275 m above msl).

### 30. THE IDENTITY OF *HYGROPHILA BENGALENSIS* MANDAL ET AL., (FAMILY: ACANTHACEAE)

Mandal *et al.* (1997) described a new species of *Hygrophila* Br. (Acanthaceae) namely *H. bengalensis* Mandal Bhattacharjee *et* Nayek based on the collections of S.K. Mandal from Gorekhara, Sonarpur, 24-Parganas (South), West Bengal.

While establishing the new taxon, the authors stated that the new species is allied to *H. salicifolia* Nees and it differs in having "obovate to elliptic lanceolate leaves with undulated margin; yellow flowers; persistent calyx with marginal hairs; long slender style with articulated stigma; seeds 24-30, arranged alternately, attached by the recurved hook-shaped retinacula. Seeds testa with mucilaginous woolly hairs; arillated at the top, and ventrally notched." But a careful study of the protologue reveals that the morphological characters of *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* are identical with *H. erecta* (Burm. f.) Hochr. Study of the type and other specimens deposited at (CAL) also revealed that this newly described taxon *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* is identical with *H. erecta* (Burm. f.) Hochr.

Further, it is to be noted that some of the differentiating characters like "persistent calyx"; "recurved retinacula" and "testa with mucilaginous woolly hairs" are the common generic characters of *Hygrophila* Br. Moreover, none of the type specimens of *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* have the "obovate leaves" as

mentioned in the protologue.

Since *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* and *H. erecta* (Burm. f.) Hochr. are conspecific, *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* becomes a superfluous name of *H. erecta* (Burm. f.) Hochr. The present status of *H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* is as follows :

*Hygrophila erecta* (Burm. f.) Hochr. in *candollea* 15: 210. 1935.

*Ruellia erecta* Burm. f., *Fl. Ind.* 135. t. 41, f. 3.1768.

Type: Rheede, *Hort. Malabaricus* 9 : 119. t. 61. 1669 (Repr. - 2 : 89. f. 46. 1983).

*Hygrophila quadrivalvis* Nees, *Pl. Asiat. Rar.* 3 : 80. 1826; Clarke in *Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India* 4. 408. 1885.

Type: *Wall. Cat. num. list no.* 2374, 2374B-D microf. - CAL!

*H. bengalensis* Mandal *et al.* in *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 94(3): 546-548. 1997 *Syn. Nov.*

Type: Holotype - Gorekhara, Sonarpur, 24-Parganas (S). West Bengal. S.K. Mandal; 30.i.1996; 1216A (CAL!) isotype - 1216 B-D (CAL!).

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